

Remarks/Arguments:

With the present response, claims 1-17 are pending, with claims 13-17 having been withdrawn pursuant to a Restriction Requirement.

Claim rejections

Claims 1-12 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 7,131,001 to Zarins et al. ("Zarins") in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,383,892 to Cardon et al. ("Cardon").

Claim 1 has been amended to recite, *inter alia*, a bifurcated stent being expandable from an unexpanded state to an expanded state. The stent comprises a trunk region having a self-expandable section constructed from a first material and a balloon expandable section constructed from a second material extending from a first end of the self-expandable section. In the expanded state the balloon expandable section is less compressible than the self-expandable section. At least one self-expandable branch is fixedly connected to and extends from a second end of the self-expandable section of the trunk region. In the expanded state the balloon expandable section is less compressible than the at least one self-expandable branch. *The self-expandable branch does not include a balloon-expandable section.*

The Office Action attempts to combine Zarins and Cardon to arrive at the claimed invention. Zarins is cited for allegedly disclosing a trunk region having a self-expandable section and a section 61 expanding from a first end of the self-expandable section and at least one self-expandable branch. The Office Action further states that Cardon discloses that the end portion of a hybrid stent device should be balloon expandable in order to obtain the advantage of insuring that the device is anchored in the blood vessel (Office Action, Page 2, line 16 - Page 3, line 8).

Applicants respectfully submit that, in light of the amendment to claim 1 herein, the rejection of claim 1 as an obvious combination of Zarins and Cardon should be withdrawn. While Cardon teaches axially rigid and axially flexible parts, Cardon also teaches a juxtaposition of axially rigid and axially flexible parts such that:

"there are *always*:

- one axially rigid part at each end of the stent;
- two axially rigid parts on either side of an axially flexible part."

Cardon, Col. 1, lines 49-51 (Emphasis added).

By *requiring* one axially rigid part at each end of the stent and two axially rigid parts on either side of an axially flexible part, the proposed combination of Zarins and Cardon teaches away from amended claim 1, which precludes a balloon expandable section in the branch.

Cardon also discloses that the rigid ends help the stent to be positioned *and ensure its anchoring*. Cardon, Col. 2, lines 56-59. The present invention, on the other hand, discloses the benefit of the self-expandable sections being to allow the self-expandable sections to conform to the shape of the body lumens surrounding them at their deployment site and to easily advance through the tortuous confines of body lumens (Spec., page 5, lines 15-19). Cardon's disclosure of rigid ends to ensure anchoring teach away from the present invention and its claims.

Because the proposed combination of Zarins and Cardon would be improper as it pertains to amended claim 1, Applicants respectfully submit that the proposed combination of Zarins and Cardon fails to provide a *prima facie* case of obviousness. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and allowance of claim 1.

Claims 2-12 all ultimately depend from claim 1. Applicants respectfully submit that claims 2-12 are allowable over the proposed combination of Zarins and Cardon for at least the same reasons set forth above with respect to amended claim 1. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and allowance of claims 2-12.

Conclusion

In light of the above amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully submit that the present application is in condition for allowance. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and allowance of the claims.

Respectfully submitted,



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